

The PSC's Gas Pipeline Safety Program

- 4 Public Safety Engineers
- Conduct inspections for a total of about **240 days every year**
- Conduct complete inspections for every gas company at least **once every 3 years**
- Review every gas company's maintenance records at least **once every year**
- Check **in-state** gas pipeline construction plans for safety
- Work with the U.S. Office of Public Safety on pipeline projects that cross our state line
- Make **unscheduled inspections** on construction projects
- Advise gas companies about safety matters

What makes gas pipelines safe?

Many things. We have strict rules and trained inspectors to enforce them. We have programs to teach about safety. Safety is important to everyone.

Pipeline operators must follow many, detailed safety rules. State and U.S. safety engineers inspect the gas system and watch workers as they build pipelines. Gas companies must have an inspector at each project site at all times. Pipeline operators must also keep detailed records to show that they follow all the rules.

The majority of people in Wisconsin heat their homes with gas. Without safe gas delivery, natural gas would not be so widely used.



The majority of people in Wisconsin heat their homes with gas. to heat

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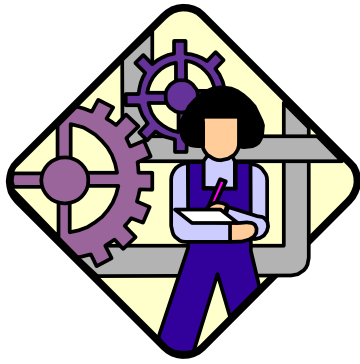
Natural Gas Pipeline Safety in Wisconsin



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Who makes the rules?

The federal government sets minimum standards for all pipelines. It makes and enforces rules for gas pipelines *which cross our state line*. However, in Wisconsin, the Public Service Commission (PSC) is the state agency that also makes and enforces rules for pipelines *within our state*. State and federal engineers work together to achieve the goal of public safety.



What are Safety Engineers?

The PSC's safety program uses a team of engineers. These engineers spend months in training on gas pipeline safety. They advise gas pipeline operators about gas safety and inspect the gas system and company records. They monitor pipeline construction. If it's not exactly right, they make sure it's corrected. Their job is to keep the public safe.



What is the greatest cause of accidents?

People digging too close to gas pipelines cause most accidents. Even a hand-held shovel can damage some gas lines. Backhoes and bulldozers can damage any pipeline. This is why laws require gas companies to mark the location of their lines, to support programs like "diggers hotline", and to watch for signs of future building or digging on private land near their lines. *Call 1-800-242-8511 at least three working days before you dig, so that gas companies can mark the location of any lines in your project area.*

Is natural gas dangerous?

Natural gas is a safe fuel. But when used improperly it can be very dangerous. A major break in a pipeline, where a large volume of gas escapes at once, is usually caused by careless digging. When a pipe breaks, the escaping gas is dangerous if it builds up in a closed space like a basement. If conditions are right, it can explode.

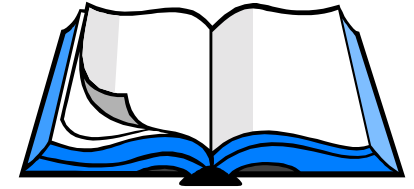
If you smell gas, leave the building at once. Do not turn a light on or use the phone. Do not even ring the doorbell.

Are gas pipelines safe if built on any route?

Public safety is protected wherever a pipeline is built. A gas pipeline is designed, built, and maintained to be safe in a city, suburb, or rural setting. However, one of the major factors considered in routing is how developed an area is. Often more developed areas have greater potential for careless digging. It's difficult to decide where to build new gas pipelines. But a new pipeline is built to protect public safety, regardless of route.



What are the safety rules?



There are detailed rules for:

- ✓ designing, building, operating, inspecting, maintaining, and repairing a pipeline
- ✓ training & testing people who work for the pipeline operator
- ✓ keeping records that show all rules are followed.

For example, the gas company must write down exactly how a worker will join two lengths of pipe. This includes how the worker will align the two pieces of pipe, clean the two ends of pipe, join the ends, and judge the results. Our inspectors review the written "joining procedure" to see that it meets safety rules. Then a worker must show that he or she can follow the required procedure. Then a joint which the worker has made is tested. A worker must also pass drug and alcohol tests before working for a gas pipeline operator.